

BARRE BICENTENNIAL



1774-1974



BARRE, MASSACHUSETTS



Cover Design by Susan R. Castonguay
Photo of "Peace" statue by Jeremy J. Carroll
Other pictures courtesy of Barre Historical Society

BARRE

MASSACHUSETTS

BICENTENNIAL BROCHURE

1774-1974

Barre Bicentennial Steering Committee



photo by Eugene C. Kennedy

Steering Committee members: seated, left to right: Myra G. Hardaker, chairman; John E. Maki, treasurer. Standing: Maurice Falco, Anton G. Simenson. Absent when picture was taken: Albert J. Regienus, J. Beba Roberts, Arnold M. Trifilo, and Robert D. Wetmore.

HEAR YE! HEAR YE! Be it known to all citizens of the Town of Barre, incorporated as Hutchinson on June 17, 1774, a 200th Birthday Celebration is about to unfold.

The Town of Barre has, indeed, a history. It is the wish of the Steering Committee that each of you will do a little research through the Barre Historical Society and the library. Thus you will become acquainted with our forebears and the lives they led to make this a town. You will gain an insight into the reasons that we have various laws and situations at the present time. You will, furthermore, increase your knowledge and understanding of the Town of Barre and of the forthcoming Bicentennial Celebration. We hope each of you will share the responsibility of making this a memorable occasion by taking an active part in the planning and by participating in the many events of Barre's Bicentennial Year, 1974.

Barre Board of Selectmen



photo by Eugene C. Kennedy

Left to right: Frank Gromelski, Jr., Matthew Trifilo, chairman; John Maki. Seated in foreground: John H. Saville, secretary to the Board of Selectmen.

The Barre Board of Selectmen extend to the people of Barre and their guests a sincere Happy 200th Birthday Celebration.

To the officials of Barre, their departments and especially the Bicentennial Committee, congratulations for a job well done.

Your generous donation of time and effort should be commended and an inspiring example of community spirit.

Again from the Board of Selectmen Happy 200th Birthday. May we leave a good heritage for the 300th anniversary.

Barre Board of Selectmen
MATTHEW TRIFILO
JOHN MAKI
FRANK GROMELSKI, JR.

Barre - A History



Barre is the former Northwest Quarter of the grant of the Rutland propriety confirmed by the Great and General Court of the royal colony of Massachusetts in 1713. In 1749, the Northwest Quarter was incorporated as the Rutland District with all the powers of a town except that of separate representation in the General Court. On June 17, 1774, the Rutland District became the town of Hutchinson, a name changed in 1776 because former governor Thomas Hutchinson, though a native American, had been associated with royal oppression while Isaac Barre had been a hero to Americans since 1765 when, in a speech in Parliament, he had described those agitating for colonial rights as not rebels but "sons of liberty."

The town of Barre suffered through the American Revolution. Two hundred and seventy townsmen did military service and it was years after the war before the economic picture took on for the majority of people any kind of rosy glow. From about 1790 to 1850, however, Barre enjoyed its finest era, growing up to and maintaining a position as one of the leading towns in Worcester County. The Ainsworth map of 1835 depicts a town bustling with industry. The 2,500 inhabitants were engaged in all manner of manufacturing. Mills abounded along the Prince River and the other hill-hurried streams that made Barre attractive to those seeking the advantages of water power.

After the Civil War and the mill-murdering freshet of 1868, Barre lost its place in the economic front rank of central Massachusetts towns. Culturally it was still a leader; where there had been a lyceum there was now a library, and after 1887 a new library and museum building. For some time the hotels around the common attracted resort business. But the fact that the railroads never came closer to Barre Center than Barre Plains doomed the town as a whole to minor involvement in the industrial expansion of the last half of the nineteenth century.

The compensation for Barre's decline as an industrial center has been the quality of life that has continued to be possible within its borders. The Charles G. Allen and Barre Wool Combing companies have provided consistent employment to hundreds of workers for generation after generation. The distance from the urban centers has been great enough but not so great that the people of Barre have ever felt cut off. Instead, while remaining integrally a part of the commonwealth, New England and the nation, they have been able to maintain and enjoy a high degree of independence.

The land-taking associated with the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir and its drainage area has sentenced Barre to a position on the map of Massachusetts in which natural expansion is and will remain difficult if not impossible. All in all, however, the town has for two hundred years demonstrated a stability of population, enterprise, and civilization that could well serve as a model to the municipalities of mankind.

JAMES E. SULLIVAN



block print by Lois Mortell

South Barre



About 1830, in that section of Barre referred to at the time as "the southern part of town," Hiram and Paul Wadsworth and Henry Holbrook erected on the Ware River a brick building for the manufacture of woolen cloth. The 1835 map of Barre shows the mill, one house and two boarding houses, with no other buildings in the vicinity until reaching the Hobbs & Bemis Powder Mill, where, sometime prior to 1824, had been constructed a system of canals and water wheels for the grinding of charcoal, sulphur, and saltpeter for the manufacture of gunpowder.

From this beginning developed the industrial village of South Barre, being first known as Dennyville, so named for the Hon. Edward Denny who successfully ran a mill on this site for many years, and then as Crossleyville, named for a later owner of the mill. The mill was destroyed by fire for the third time in 1894 and was not rebuilt.

At the turn of the century, Francis Willey, Esq. of Bradford, England, attracted by the abundant water of the Ware River and the facilities of two railroads that ran through the village, acquired the mill site and the adjoining powder-mill property for the establishment of a wool combing mill. The population of the village is said to have been about twenty-five at that time.

As this venture prospered and more buildings were added and more houses built, a typical mill village evolved. By the time of World War II, the population had reached about eighteen hundred, and there were in the village two churches, the Episcopal Church, the cornerstone of which was laid in 1909, and the Roman Catholic Church, ground breaking having taken place in 1917, a new grammar school, a post office, Hotel Blyth, Florence Hall for the social events of the village, six grocery stores, a department store, a variety store, a drug store, a doctor's office, a tailor shop, a cobbler shop, a barber shop, and two cafes.

Since that time, however, the character of the village has changed although the Barre Wool Combing Company, Ltd. continues to be one of the major wool combing mills in the country. Now, most of the homes are privately owned, and with the advent of shopping centers and super markets and with the greater mobility of the individual, most of the shops and stores have closed.

MERRITT CUTTING

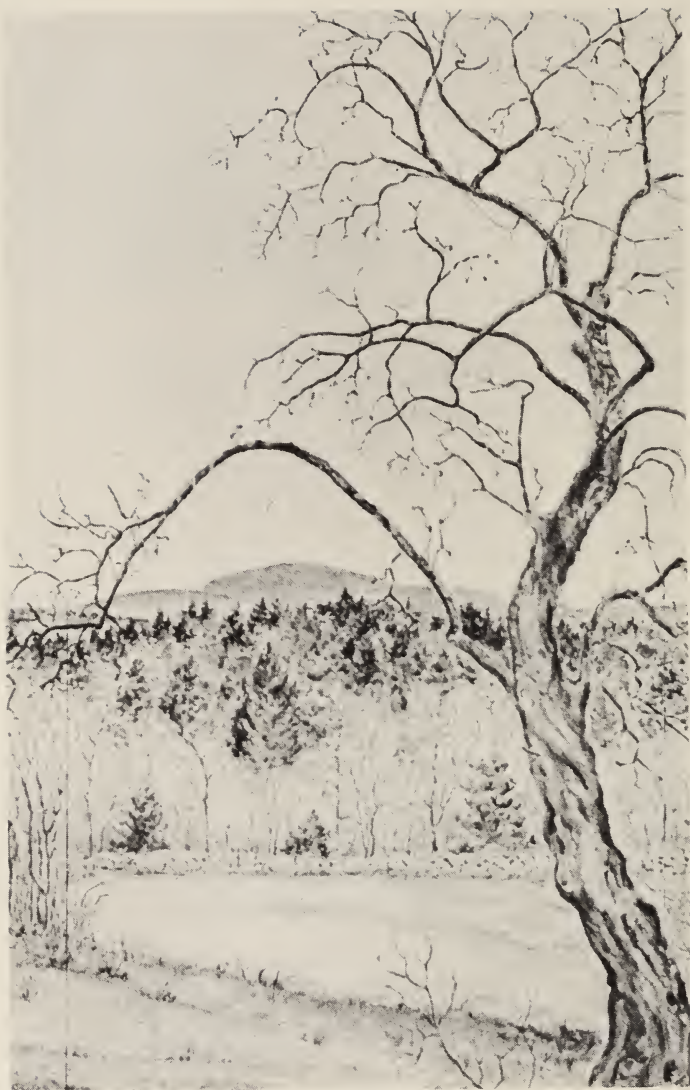
Barre Plains-Then and Now

As early as 1749 settlers were crowding into Barre Plains lured by the arable lands and the water power furnished by the Ware River. It soon became a thriving community, aided immeasurably by Seth Pratt, who built a dam and dug a canal about 1805 which furnished water power to the many industries established along its banks; saw and grist mills, woolen mills, tanneries, cheese factories, factories where the spinning of cotton flourished; bricks were made and houses built using them. With the coming of the railroad the village grew. By 1899, according to the Worcester Telegram, there were a post office, three meat markets, a blacksmith shop, machine shop, a sash and blind factory, saw and grist mill, public hall, a two-room schoolhouse, a cobler shop, three dressmakers' shops, two railroad stations with their freight sheds and water tank, also milk sheds from which six hundred cans of milk were shipped daily, and passenger trains and freight trains daily from both the Boston and Albany and the Boston and Maine stations. There were 35 houses within one mile of the post office and nearly 200 people lived in this area. The famous Hotel Brunswick was located here. In the summer 8 to 10 pleasure boats plied up and down the river.



Today Barre Plains is a quiet village with well-cared-for homes and mowed lawns, clustering around green commons while other homes grace diverging roads or sit on hillsides that lead from the center of town. One store, one barber shop, and a post office serve the village. Meanwhile it lies basking in the memories of other days, other glories; the noise of water wheels that turned its factories stilled forever.

ANITA RICH



watercolor by Charles Scott Riley

If We Want It To Be

BY

CHARLES SCOTT RILEY

1906-1966

Our town is its own world, —
Though satellite.
It's an island within a sea
Where oceans of green-woods
The houses surround
And brown fields are beaches between.
It's a whole universe
If we want it to be; —
Our village — green forest — and lea.
The valleys are full
In the early dawn,
Like pink cotton coves;
Hills are headlands beyond —
And pines; — anchored masts — staggered rows; —
Where the sun's a great galleon
With sails of red
In a pathway of crimson
Dead ahead.
Just a transient schooner's bright brevity
Gone quickly in daylight's reality
As the hillsides drain out
Grey as lead.
Each day is its own eternity
If we want it to be —
We thank thee God
For sublimity.
Our town has the sound
Of a gentle surf; —
The hum of its fun
And the beat of its work;
Hunting is good
If you like a gun.
There's a hermit here
With his way of life.
Volition is ours;
That's a God-given grace;
No paths on the sea,
But we have guidance in strife.
It's a wonderful world
If we want it to be.
Now we give our thanks
For so much more,
We can make our life sing,
If we write a good score.

Band Concert Town

"Barre? Oh, yes, I know the town; I used to go to the Wednesday night band concerts there."

How many times have natives of Barre heard these words when, far from home, they mentioned their old home town?

Wednesday night was the night of the week, and the tree-shaded common was the mecca for young and old from miles around. The music drifting through the warm summer air, dancing on the green, a box of Jack's pop corn, row on row of cars, blare of horns punctuating the silence at the end of each musical selection — these are some of the images conjured up at mention of the Wednesday night concerts.

Barre's tradition of band concerts goes back at least to 1859 when a music stand was erected in the park. In June of 1866 it "took to itself legs and walked away to a new location on the east side of the old Common opposite the store of Messrs. H. Woods & Co." making way for the Civil War monument. A new band stand with roof was put up in 1882. It moved to the Rockingstone Park when the new Harding Allen memorial band stand was built in 1931. Mainstays of the myriad bands which performed in Barre were its own, the Barre Brass and the South Barre Brass bands.

Then there was an interlude when the band stand was silent. Sporadic attempts to recapture the music of the past were unsuccessful until weekly concerts, now on Sunday evenings, were resumed under the leadership of John Hansen, director of the Quabbin and Gilbertville bands. With the more recent sponsorship of the Pro Musica Society Barre seems assured of retaining its claim to fame as the "Band Concert Town of New England."

MARY KELLEY



photo courtesy of Ruth Thompson
Barre Brass Band at Memorial Day Parade in 1890's.

The Italian-American Club, South Barre

Around the year 1914, a few Italian men approached the management of Barre Wool Combing Company for a place to spend a few leisure hours after work and on Sundays. The company provided the building, later known as the Italian-American Club.

The members, many at the time, paid small dues for electricity and fuel. As time went on more members joined and soon they had a well-organized club. The building was well kept as most of the members shared in the work. During the spring and summer months the men played bocci. After supper many people would witness the games. During the winter months card-playing and pool are still enjoyed.

The club was also a place where bands would rehearse evenings as well as Sundays, making life a concert. One of the holidays that many of us remember as kids was Columbus Day. A large float was made and one of the members would dress as Columbus with binoculars looking for land, followed by the band playing mostly marches. After the parade was over the wives of the musicians and other women in the neighborhood came out on their doorsteps and provided refreshments. The club was really enjoyed by all and still is today.

JOHN JANNETTE

Band Leaders —

Edward Spinelli, Charles Colletti, John Franciose, Severino D'Annolfo



photo courtesy of Viola D'Annolfo
South Barre Brass Band in Early 1920's

Barre's Namesakes

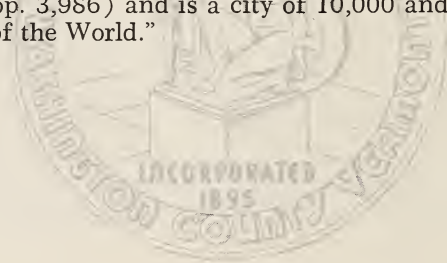


Barre has two namesakes — Barre, New York, and Barre, Vermont. Barre, New York, was incorporated in 1818 and was named by John Lee, who had migrated from his hilly home town to the flat, fertile land of western New York State. He became a prominent citizen and a judge.

Barre, Vermont, received its name in a somewhat different manner. In March, 1793, the first town meeting was held and it was voted to give the privilege of naming the town to the man subscribing the most money to the house of worship to be built. Ezekiel Dodge Wheeler bid highest, but payment of his note was slow and it was destroyed in 1805 pursuant to a town vote.

That same year Capt. Joseph Thompson of Holden, Mass., and Jonathan Sherman of Barre, Mass., had a sparring match in a barn. The prize of the match was the privilege of naming the town. "The valiant Jonathan won and named the town for his native town in the old Bay State." (from Barre Gazette Souvenir Issue, 1934)

Barre, New York, remains today an agricultural community of a little over 2000 population, but Barre, Vermont, has outstripped its parent town (pop. 3,986) and is a city of 10,000 and is known as "The Granite Center of the World."



photos courtesy of Town Board, Barre, N.Y.
and City Clerk, Barre, Vt.

Civil War Monument

The Civil War monument in North Park bears the words, "Erected by the town, 1866," on its granite base. On the marble above we read "Barre honors her patriot dead" — "The Union lives" — "Guard it sacredly" — "Joy for the returned" — "Tears for those that come not again" — "Gettysburg" — "Port Hudson" — "Antietam" — "Newbern" — and the names of 59 men who gave their lives and the date, locality, and cause of death. An American eagle is poised at the top of the gracefully channeled shaft.

The monument has an interesting and somewhat embattled history of its own. In other guise it had stood for four years in Haverhill as a memorial to Hannah Duston, pioneer woman who had slain her Indian abductors. Controversy arose about whether Hannah had lived on the site where the monument was erected and about the spelling of the inscriptions. The monument was removed when final payment was not made. With new inscriptions, an eagle placed at the top, and some other changes, it became Barre's Civil War monument. It was brought into town almost surreptitiously after much heated debate about whether it should be placed in Glen Valley Cemetery or in the center of town.

In a letter in the February 2, 1866, Barre Gazette, a writer defended the center-of-town location with these words:

"The monument will consecrate the locality and its silent, though impressive lesson will be felt by the playful boy sporting around its base, the hungry mechanic hastening to his dinner, or the anxious debtor hurrying to the bank to save his note from the fees of the notary."

World War I Monument

"A doughboy in bronze, fully accoutered and in an alert posture, eyes watchful and muscles tense, a beautiful and artistic piece of sculpture, the figure surmounting a huge boulder brought in from the hills of Barre" was unveiled in North Park at noon on Armistice Day, 1929. "The monument was unveiled by little Constance Pratt, daughter of Ernest Pratt, a doughboy, and granddaughter of the late George W. Pratt, a member of the monument committee." The many flags that had been carried in the parade and then massed at the monument were raised by the bearers and flung to the breeze as the band played The Star Spangled Banner.

Sculptor, Joseph P. Pollia, New York

South Barre Monument

The statue of "Peace" was erected by the citizens of South Barre and Barre Plains for the soldiers and sailors of those two villages who fought in the first World War. The monument, seven feet of granite and bronze, was unveiled on October 23, 1920, by Col. F. V. Willey. The former soldiers and sailors marched to the green with the South Barre Brass Band followed by 200 school children. The Stars and Stripes rose above the statue as the band played The Star Spangled Banner. Then everyone joined in community singing of "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag."

(photo by Jeremy J. Carroll on cover)

Barre Plains Monuments

The three points of Barre Plains's triangular Common have granite monuments erected in memory of three young men who did not return from World War II. The inscriptions read:

In memory of Sgt. Joseph A. Illiscavitch — USA Air Corp — 1917-1944
Killed at South China Seas — Philippine Islands

* * *

In memory of Staff Sgt. Thomas W. Power — USA Air Corp — 1918-1942
Reported Missing in Action — Feb. 1st, 1942 — Philippine Island — Manila

* * *

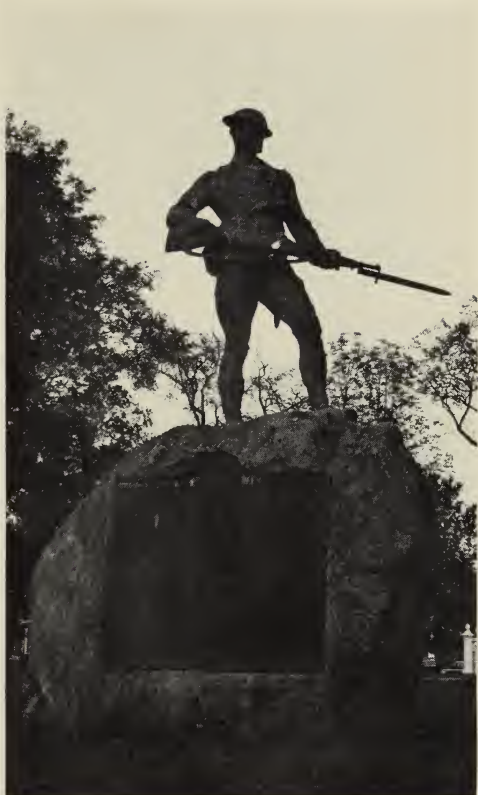
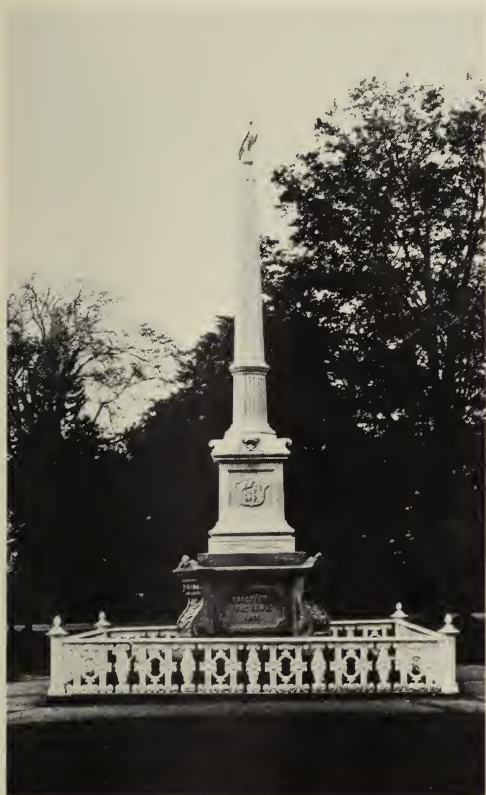
In memory of Pfc. Francis R. Sinclair — U S Army — 1922-1944
Killed in Action — Italy — 88th Blue Devils Div.

World War II and Korean War Monument

"A modern monument of granite standing tall and handsome in North Park in company with the Civil War and World War I memorials" was dedicated on Memorial Day, 1963. Basil Izzi, World War II hero, former selectman, and member of the monument committee, was speaker at the ceremonies. Mrs. Phyllis Robinson, president of American Legion Post 2 Auxiliary and Mrs. Mary Ryder, president of American Legion Post 404 Auxiliary, unveiled the monument.

The symbolic sword of battle in the center panel was flanked by the insignia of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. The names of 540 men and women from Barre who had served in World War II and the Korean conflict were engraved on the shaft of Barre (Vt.) granite.

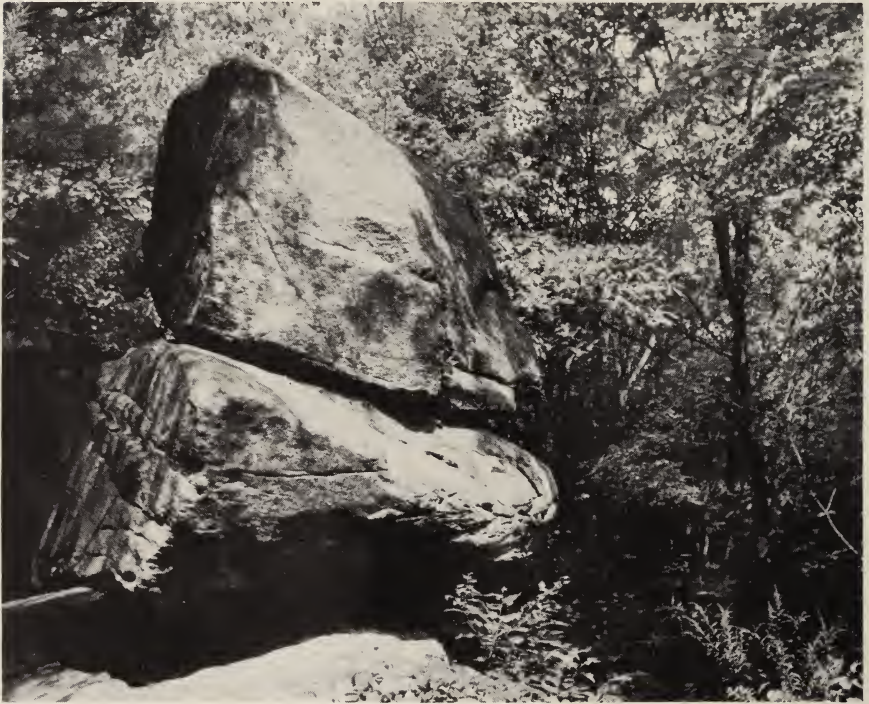
Monuments In North Park



photos by Jeremy J. Carroll

Nature's Landmarks

Ten thousand years ago one of the plastic, frozen tentacles of a mile-deep glacier engulfed and tore boulders from the sides of the White Mountains. It carried them along as it grew, crushing its way southward from its polar ice cap body. Somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean south of what is now New England the ice monster lost its battle with its enemy, Heat. It dropped its looted boulders that were held in stratified layers and became a deluge. The boulders were swept along in the currents until they fell to their new homes. Some landed in rather spectacular positions and became landmarks to the people who eventually came to live near them.



Cradle Rock

Barre received its share of the glacier's granite booty. In some cases it was two or more stones balanced precariously, one on top of another, as if some giant child had playfully placed them there. Cradle Rock, one of the more spectacular of these "giants' playthings", is located west of Route 122, near Petersham. This phenomenon of nature has remained a popular attraction in a picnic area since Barre was settled.

Indian Rock

Nature's ability as a sculptor can be seen in Indian Rock in which it has carved the head of an Indian in full head-dress then left it on a pedestal. Although this landmark was well known to past generations of Barre it is now on private land and seldom visited out of respect for the owner's rights.



Rum Rock

One of the larger conversation pieces around Barre, Rum Rock now stands with its monolithic beauty hidden by a half-mile of underbrush that has taken possession of the cart roads that once passed within "spittin" distance of it. It has been the inspiration for much folk tale in the past.



Shelving Rock

The unimaginable weight of the same glacier that left our other landmarks also displaced the underlying bedrock that it bruised in its growth and its watery death. It left some stratified layers of granite jutting out over others to form a roof-like overhang. Just such a work of nature provided an early settler of Barre, James Caldwell, with shelter during his first winter here.

text by William J. Phelan, Jr.
photos by Michael Phelan

The Harwood Family in Barre, Mass.

The east part of Barre, in its early days, was mostly populated by Harwood families, all directly descended from Henry and Elizabeth Harwood, who came to Boston in 1630, along with Governor Winthrop, first governor of England's Massachusetts Bay Colony. George Harwood was the colony's first treasurer but always remained in England.

Daniel Harwood, no. 43 in *Harwood Families*, Book No. 2, came to Barre from Charlton in 1800 and bought the James Caldwell farm, famed for having the first framed house in Barre. He had ten children. He died in 1803 and is buried in that part of the farm now called Riverside Cemetery, but in the old days called Harwood Cemetery.

Daniel's youngest son was Wilcut, no. 84 in *Harwood Families*, Book No. 2. He was active in town affairs and surveyed and laid out the streets of Barre Common. He also designed and with other Harwoods built Barre's famed covered bridge, which for nearly a century withstood floods, only to be floated downstream and stranded, intact, on its side in 1938.



Old Covered Bridge across Ware River, BARRE, MASS.

My grandfather, George Harwood, no. 168, married Lucinda Stetson and they "hired out" to a nearby farmer who got the California Gold Rush fever, gave Grandfather a deed to the farm, and told him to send the money as he could to him in California. Grandfather was a highly successful farmer and his wife's butter, cheese, and preserves were always in demand. Thus the farm was duly paid for.



Ware River at Covered Bridge in Barre — Showing Interior of Bridge — March 31, 1936.

All the Harwoods were prosperous farmers. Grandfather in time came to own (he and his sons) several farms in the Burnshirt River Valley, including the Perry Johnson farm where he build a dam on the Burnshirt River and erected a sawmill for his sons' use. It had the first turbine water wheel in the entire Ware River Valley, and they operated it for over a quarter century most successfully.

Son George N. was outside man and got the timber cut and to the mill and found sale for the products, both raw and processed, and kept a four-horse team busy delivering. When the railroad put in a side-track at Harwood Flag Station, sales mushroomed. Son George N. was busy selling as well as supervising the woods help and finding markets for the wood products. He and brother Henry turned out to make a smooth-working team, with father George ready with financial help and advice. Old Barre houses still have porch brackets with wood acorns turned out by Henry.

Other Harwoods by birth or marriage were prosperous and respected citizens. Most were farmers — several Sibleys and Stetsons were relatives. Now there are all new names in the area and the land is largely state-owned for Boston's water supply.

No longer is there a railroad or Harwood's Flag Station. Harwood's Crossing, even, is a memory.

There are no more Harwoods to hold a reunion in the fine grove of trees just south of Riverside Cemetery, with all trains making an unscheduled stop — there was no platform — just jump into the waiting arms, and in leaving, much screaming as the women were "heisted" to the car steps and the train crews were given immense packages of leftover food. The Harwoods were not dieters in those days!

It is many years since I last maintained my own home, which was in Barre; but I am still a registered voter there in Barre where so many memories take me.

CHARLES A. HARWOOD
Lake Worth, Florida

Sports in Barre



Barre High School Football Team—1892—photo courtesy of Ruth Thompson
Left to right, front row: Ed Hunt and Harold (Pink) Hinckley; middle row: William Weeks, Arthur Bassett, Charles G. Allen; back row: Fred Crossley, Robert Williams, Alpha Sawyer, Charles Carruth, Alvin Bailey, Waldo Smith.

One hundred years ago, when Barre's Centennial celebration was held, no mention was made of sports. Since that time sports competition has become an integral part of our community.

By the turn of the century baseball was flourishing as a pastime, and a game was in progress on the common most of the time. In June of 1900 a letter in the Barre Gazette signed M.E.B. complained of the hazards of crossing the common because of these games and he mentioned his daughter was even hit by an errant baseball.

A town team was organized early and games were played with North Rutland, Petersham, Hubbardston, Gilbertville, and other surrounding communities. In the first decades of this century it became a common practice to have games on the common on the 4th of July and also as part of the festivities of the Barre Fair. Later, when Thorng Field was constructed, games were held there and the game on the 4th of July was always a well-attended, highly competitive affair. In the 30's Barre was often represented by the Sons of Italy team and the game started only after a foot race from Barre Common to Thorng Field was completed as part of the celebration of Independence Day.

Football, no longer part of our sports scene, was played in Barre, and even the high school had a team for a while. It was before the day of the "specialist" and men played both offense and defense, and Barre's team was composed of most of the eligible boys in the school.

Basketball was most popular and was played in several locations in town. For many years games were played in the hall at the Massasoit House. The multi-purpose Williams Hall was the scene of many basketball games. This was a game that required just five players and so it was not unusual on a Friday evening to have a friendly competition in Williams Hall between the Barre Wildcats and the Barre Athletic Club. Price of admission was 25¢ and a typical game produced a score of 15 to 13.



photo by Loring Studios

Quabbin Regional High School State Championship Soccer Team

Left to right, front row: Sam Puliafico, Kevin Rice, Mike Kirby, Kerry Kenda, Vinny Tomasello, Adolph Andrukonis, Jim Owens, Jim Laporte, Rick Lindsten; back row: Coach Ray Turcotte, Bob Lapati, David Williams, Chuck Andrukonis, Jim Netishen, Tom Mansfield, Ed Podbelski, Olen Muir, Paul Clark, Ed Orszulak.

In a subsequent era, games were played in Florence Hall in South Barre, and the town was proudly represented by a team from Barre High School. With the construction of Ruggles Lane School after World War II, the Barre High Hornets moved their home games to that location. They were a consistently talented team, and were invited to the Tri-State Tournament in Turners Falls year in and year out where they always acquitted themselves well and more than once came home with the championship trophy.

For quite a time track was an important sport in Barre and over the years many runners of this community excelled. Many young men won county track awards and on June 6, 1931, a track team of Barre girls culminated three years of exceptional competition by gaining permanent possession of the McTigue Cup as they dominated a track meet at Haskell Field in Worcester.

For the individual who needed his exercise provision was made. When the Barre Hotel first opened there was a bowling alley in the rear of the structure. Tennis courts were not rare and in 1900 there was even one located in North Park. For the golfer there were the "links of Harry A. Irish" located in Barre Plains on what had been the Austin F. Adams farm. It was a nine hole course, extending over one and an eighth miles. Competition was keen and matches were held with groups from Ware and other surrounding towns. Each year a cup was presented to the club champion by Mrs. Alexander Martin.

Today our town is part of the Quabbin Regional High School District. The teams from that school have become almost exclusively the focus of our sports enthusiasm and the Quabbin Panthers have represented us well. Their baseball teams are usually winners often advancing into the state playoffs; the basketball team has been Wachusett League Champions and subsequent tourney participants; Quabbin runners have regained the track glory we once had in the 20's and 30's; and in soccer they have excelled. After several outstanding years, in one of which the Quabbin soccer team was Western Massachusetts champions, in 1973 the team brought to our area its first state championship.

ALBERT L. CLARK

Houses



Usually anniversary brochures picture only the oldest houses in a town. In a departure from the norm I asked photographer Alycia Butler to tour Barre and focus her camera lens on houses in a variety of styles — to present a pictorial story of the times in which the houses were built.

James Caldwell, who came to Barre around 1729 and spent his first winter under a shelving rock, some years later built the commodious gambrel-roofed farmhouse pictured here. Patterned after a ship's hull, the gambrel roof, like the family it sheltered, had to be strong to withstand the long snowbound winters. (Cape Cod houses with their steep-pitched roofs were designed for the same purpose.)

After the Revolution Americans sought to develop a distinctive style of architecture befitting their new status as a nation. The Federal period lasted from 1780 to 1820 and was characterized by its classic lines and general restraint. This Federal house, moved long ago from Pleasant Street to Mechanic Street, has a hip roof, central chimney, not too large windows, and an impressive front door.

Proud of their new republic, our forefathers wished to emulate the ancient Greeks. In architecture the Greek Revival period dated from the late 1820's to 1850 and gave Barre this elegant Elias Carter house with portico supported by six columns. Elias Carter, noted for his skill as a carpenter and wood carver, built many other houses in the area and at least a dozen churches, including the beautiful Templeton Church, which was often copied.





The first pangs of the Industrial Revolution brought into being small manufactories in different parts of town. The bricks used in the lovely old farmhouse in Barre Plains are reputed to have been made right on the farm.

The long reign of Queen Victoria in England was reflected here in the Victorian Era of moralistic behavior. Any desire to be frivolous was expressed in such things as furnishings and — the Victorian house! This imposing house on Pleasant Street with its cupola, gables, and bays, and its ornamentation called “gingerbread” is a striking example.



As industry flourished housing was needed for immigrants who arrived from Europe to work in the mills. In these mill houses built for the workers at the South Barre woolen mill the emphasis was on “function before form.” Architecture in the 20th century has responded to the introduction of new cultures, and the English, Italians, Polish, and Lithuanians who arrived in the early 1900’s each contributed a bit of Old World charm to this town’s architecture.





For a number of years it seemed natural that every new house have a front porch, and many old houses blossomed out with porches. These were the years when what little leisure people had, they spent in their neighborhoods or sitting on their own front porch.

Then the automobile transformed America into a mobile society, and the mobile home was discovered as an abode for the small family or the retired.

When servicemen returned from World War II the town offered them building lots on former Town Farm property at a cost of \$1.00 a lot. The architectural styles in the homes built include split level, California ranch, and modified Capes.

What could be more typical of these days of "instant everything" than a modular home, complete with furniture, hauled to the site and assembled by crane?

As you tour Barre you will see new houses in variations of almost every style pictured here. Perhaps you will take time to note and ponder one other trend. As the town celebrates and as America approaches a 200th anniversary, many old houses, abandoned and fallen into disrepair, are being re-surrected and restored to their pristine beauty.

Text by Mary Kelley

Photos by Alycia Smith Butler



Churches

Barre's first church was built in 1753 and was the only church in town for fifty years. Today Barre has five churches: three in the center of town and two in South Barre.

Religious activities have always been an integral part of the life of the community. Church oriented events such as church fairs, suppers, adult and youth meetings and programs have enriched the social life of the community.

The churches of Barre seem destined to remain active through strength of fellowship and unity of ecumenical spirit.

SUSAN R. CASTONGUAY



Congregational Church



St. Thomas-a-Becket Church



Methodist Church



St. Joseph's Church



Christ Episcopal Church

Schools

The history of schooling in Barre has been a story of unifying, consolidating — from the lessons learned at a mother's knee to the one-room school, to the school in the centers of the town, to the regional school.

Whereas in the past children in the Barre and South Barre-Barre Plains areas did not meet in school until high school years, today kindergarten is the time of convention, and along with the kindergartners, all the children in grades one and two attend Roger F. Langley School in High Plains. Youngsters in grades three, four, five, and six go to school at Ruggles Lane near the center of Barre. Junior high school students join their confreres from Hardwick, Hubbardston, and Oakham when they reach the seventh grade at Quabbin Regional Junior-Senior High School.

In the spirit of the times, today's education should make for a less insular, more cosmopolitan human being.

MARY KELLEY



No. 4 School in 1906 — photo courtesy of No. 4 Community Club

First row, left to right: Ida Bezanson, Lottie Bezanson, Salome Cummings, Gertrude Cummings, Willie Fisher, Leon Lincoln, Frank Cummings. Second row: Bessie Bezanson, Annie Cummings, Myrtle Polly, Gladys Bezanson, Minnie Tappin, Mary Fisher, Annie Jehlicka, Earl Bishop, Miss Flora Danforth, Della Marshall, Novella Nourse, Lester Friend, Alton Traver, Henry Bishop.



Barre Plains School, 1909 (now fire station)



photo courtesy of Valma Murphy

Student Body of Henry Woods High School in 1901 (Until 1900 the high school was in Town Hall.)

Schedule of Events

- April 1 — Funeral for R. Razor at 7:00 P.M. on Barre Common. Sponsored by Brothers of the Brush.
- April 27 — Kick-off Party at Caruso's Rustic Lounge, South Barre. Supper at 7:30 P.M. followed by Recognition of the Queen and Court; Designers of Commemorative Coin. Dancing to tune of Paul Mitus Polka Band.
- June 16 — Firemen's Muster and Parade at 1:00 P.M. on Barre Common. Chairman — Stanley Miknaitis.
- June 17 — Founder's Day with Panorama at 7:00 P.M. Sponsored by Barre Players.
- June 23 — Bicentennial Music Festival at Felton Field. Sponsored by Festival Committee, Jay Beard, Chairman.
- July 13 and 14 — Bicentennial Open Golf Tournament, Road Race, and Softball Tournament.
- July 21 — Bicentennial Canoe Race at 1:00 P.M. at Miller's Beach. Sponsored by the Rat Pack Paddlers' Canoe Club.
- August 3 — Roman Festival at Coldbrook Country Club 6:00 P.M. Italian Food and Music.
- August 10 — Bicentennial Ball at Coldbrook Country Club. Sponsored by Ball Committee with Mr. and Mrs. Richard Beard, Co-chairmen.
- August 11 — Old Home Day beginning at 10:45 with Morning Worship on the Common; 12 noon, Raising of the Flag; Master of Ceremonies; Guest Speaker; 12:15 P.M., Box Social on the Common; 1:00 P.M., Mini-float Parade; 2:00 P.M., Fashion Show; 2:30 P.M., Mode of Transportation, 1700-1900's Parade; Games, Square Dancing, Pet Show; Entertainment throughout the Afternoon; 5:00 P.M., Bean Supper; 7:00 P.M., Band Concert.
- August 17 — 11:00 A.M. Bicentennial Parade.
- October 19 — Bay State Historical League fall meeting with Barre Historical Society as host.

Barre Bicentennial Queen and Her Court



Barre Bicentennial Queen and Her Court — photo by Eugene C. Kennedy
Left to right: Gail Dorsey, Cheryl Varnot, Queen Jayne Franciose, Mary McDonald, Kathleen Miknaitis.

During our Special Celebration Week, August 10-August 17, other special events will take place such as Art Exhibits, Square Dances, Band Concerts, and Sports Activities with dates to be announced.

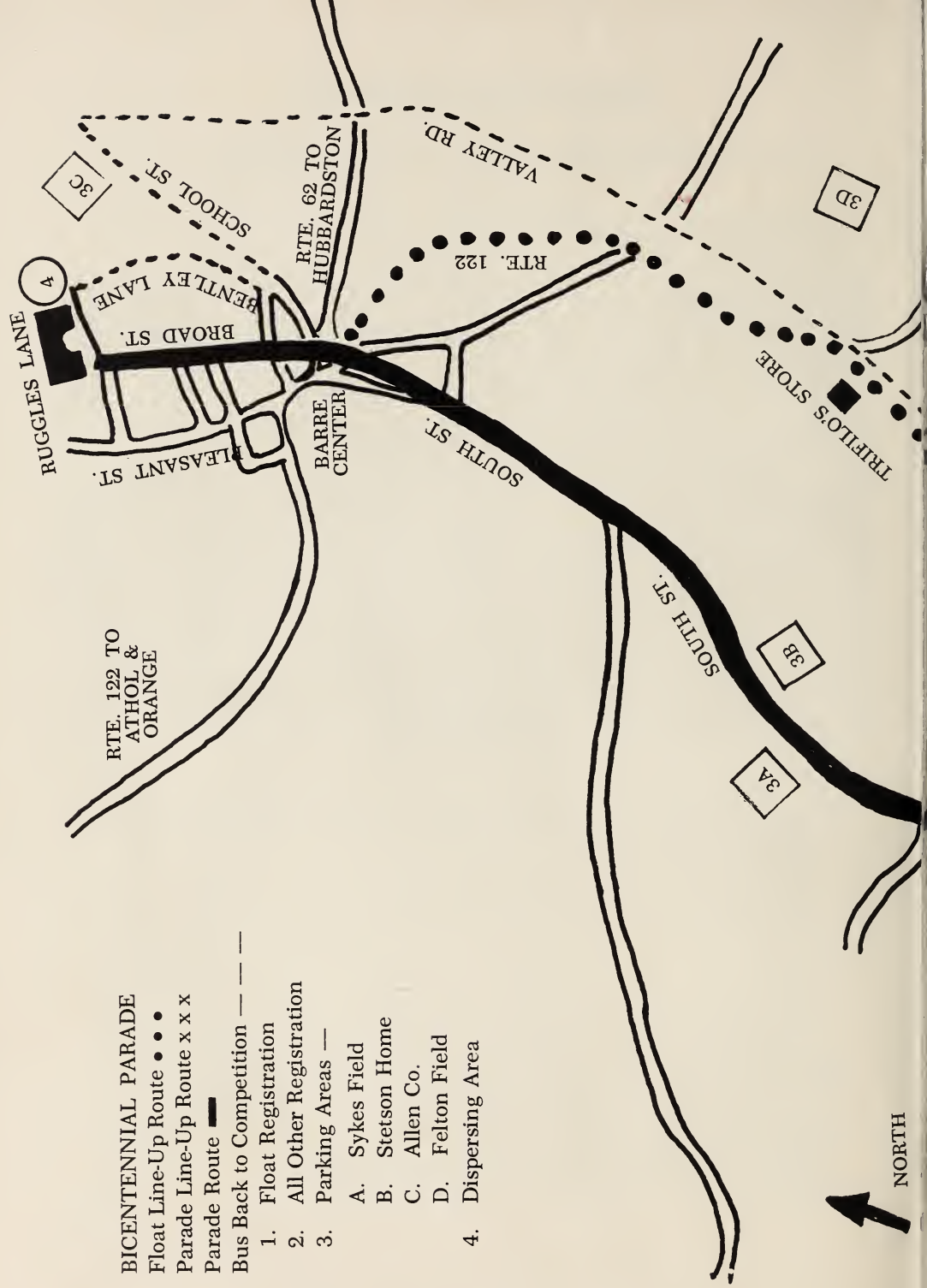
Items on Sale at Bicentennial Headquarters include Silver and Copper Coins — Necklaces — Paper Weights — Napkins — Wooden Nickels — Souvenir Fluted Dish — Maps dating back to 1891 — Bumper Stickers — Key Rings — Collectors' Items.

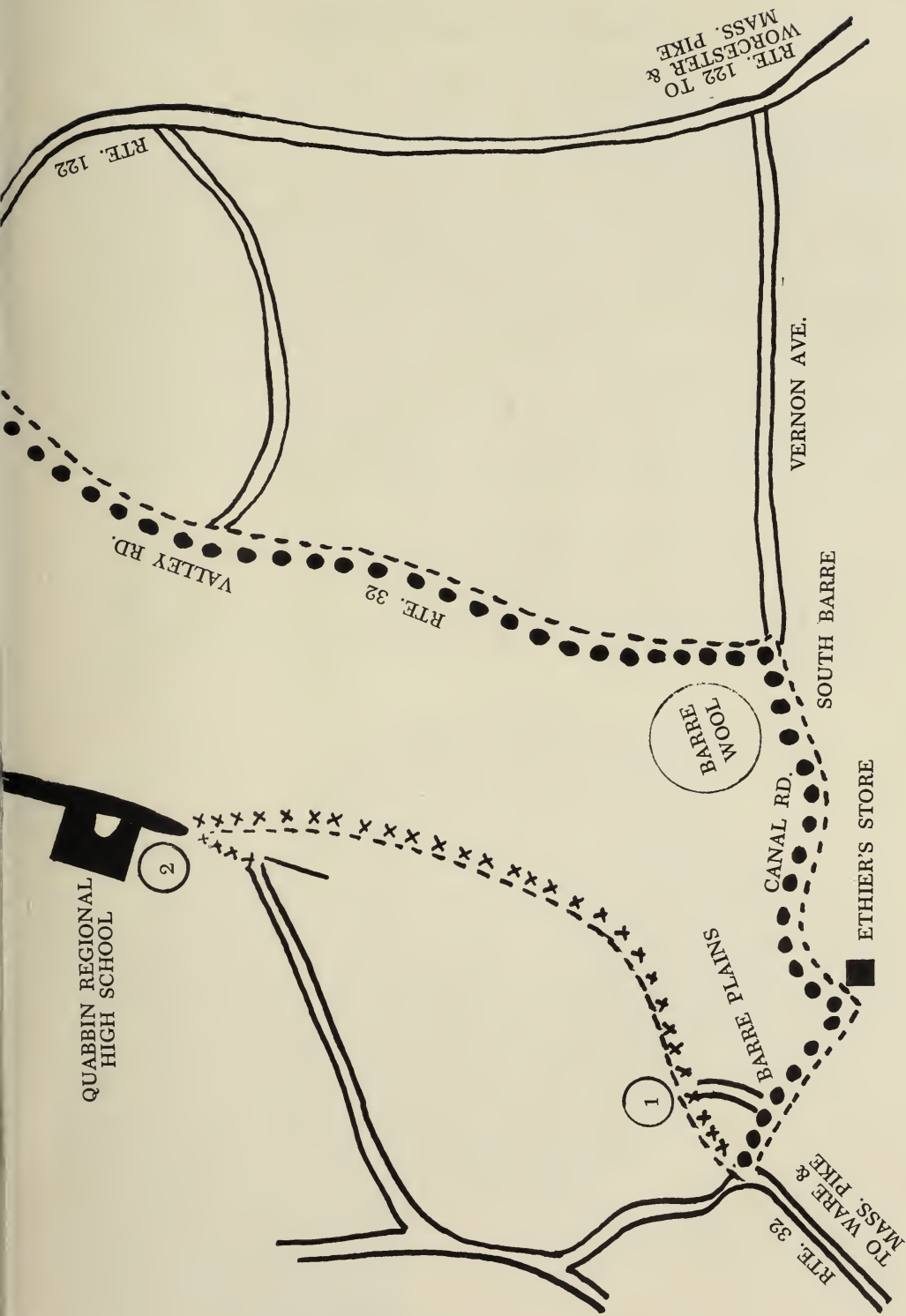
BICENTENNIAL PARADE

- Float Line-Up Route •••••
- Parade Line-Up Route x x x
- Parade Route —

Bus Back to Competition — — —

1. Float Registration
2. All Other Registration
3. Parking Areas —
 - A. Sykes Field
 - B. Stetson Home
 - C. Allen Co.
 - D. Felton Field
4. Dispersing Area





Barre Bicentennial Commemorative Coin

Face of Coin:

The official town seal is shown — that seal was designed by Mrs. Charles H. Follansby in 1911, an editor and publisher of the Barre Gazette for many years. The 100th Anniversary of that paper described the seal as follows:

The seal shows a diamond placed between two circles, the circles being a symbol of completeness and strength, and the diamond representing the geographical shape of the town. Within the diamond is the old Naquag House, which stood on the site of the present Fagnoli block at the head of the Common, and was a landmark in the old days, being a stopping place of the through stages, one of which may be seen drawn up at the door of the Inn.

Within the smaller circle are the "everlasting hills of Barre," and below are reminders of one of the industries of the older days, cheese making.

Cutting across the lower edge of the smaller circle is a banner which bears the words "Tranquil and Alert," a motto which owes its origin to Miss Anna Fuller, author of *Pratt Portraits* and other books, who spoke of the town in these words in an article written for Mrs. Follansby and published in "Our Town," a magazine which will be remembered by older residents as the organ of the Village Improvement Society.

Reverse Side of Coin:

The design was created by Daniel F. Breen, a local artist of note. This design was selected from several entries submitted and shows the beautiful Harding Allen Memorial Bandstand on the Common.

HELEN W. CONNINGTON

Bicentennial Parade



*The Word-famous Eight Tons of Champions
Budweiser, Clydesdales*

August 17 — 11 A.M.

Charles Hudson, Chairman

Parade route to start on South Street in front of Quabbin Regional High School and continue to Barre Center and Broad Street, dispersing at Ruggles Lane School.

Float categories will be Historical, Beautiful, and Original.

Judging of the floats will be done before the parade at 10:30 A.M. There will be three prizes in each category. Trophies will also be given for the best Colorguard Unit; Mounted Unit; Musical Unit.



4:00 P.M. — Band Competition at Quabbin Regional High School. List of Bands scheduled for the Competition: Golden Crusaders of Southington, Connecticut; Olympians of Springfield, Mass.; Centurians of Enfield, Connecticut; Pine Tree Warriors of Lewiston, Maine; Emerald Knights of Saratoga, New York; Valleyaires of Northbridge, Mass. These bands will also march in the Parade.

*Captain Joe Blass
Mummers' Ferko String Band
Philadelphia, Pa.*

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

By His Excellency

FRANCIS W. SARGENT

Governor

A P R O C L A M A T I O N

1974

WHEREAS, The Town of Barre was incorporated in 1774, amid the throes of revolution, one year prior to the battle of Bunker Hill, and

WHEREAS, Celebration of the bicentennial anniversary of this event takes on particular significance due to the political and social importance of the township in our early history, and

WHEREAS, It is appropriate that we join the citizens of Barre in paying tribute both to those who founded the municipal, business and social life of the community and to those who contribute to its prosperity today, and

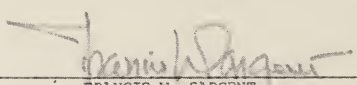

WHEREAS, While enjoying the fruits of past struggles, the people of Barre are rededicating themselves to a bright and successful future;

NOW, therefore, I, FRANCIS W. SARGENT, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim the year 1974, as

BARRE BICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY YEAR

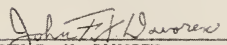
and urge the citizens of the Commonwealth to take cognizance of this event and to participate fittingly in its observance.

GIVEN at the Executive Chamber in Boston, this first day of May, in the year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and seventy-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the one hundred and ninety-eighth.



FRANCIS W. SARGENT.

By His Excellency the Governor,



JOHN F. X. DAVOREN,
Secretary of the Commonwealth.

GOD SAVE THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Signing the Governor's Proclamation



photo by Eugene C. Kennedy

Left to right: Charles Hudson, parade chairman; Selectman John Maki, bicentennial treasurer; Rep. Robert D. Wetmore, bicentennial committee member; Town Accountant and Moderator Roger F. Langley; Selectman Frank Gromelski, Jr.; Anthony Watson, 1974 appointee to bicentennial committee. Seated: Governor Francis W. Sargent.

Tours

Prepared for Your Enjoyment by Burton R. Frost

TOUR I

Barre Common

Picture postcards of Barre's Bandstand Common are available at Barre Historical Society and from cooperating businesses. Snap some pictures of your own, too, or stand at the bandstand and just look around.

Look at the Town Hall, then observe the other buildings surrounding the Common. Can you find one that is almost a mirror image of it? How many buildings built in the same style and time period can you find?

Now try to locate the buildings which are older than the Town Hall. Did you strip away the facades of the buildings along the business block to note that the buildings are indeed old?

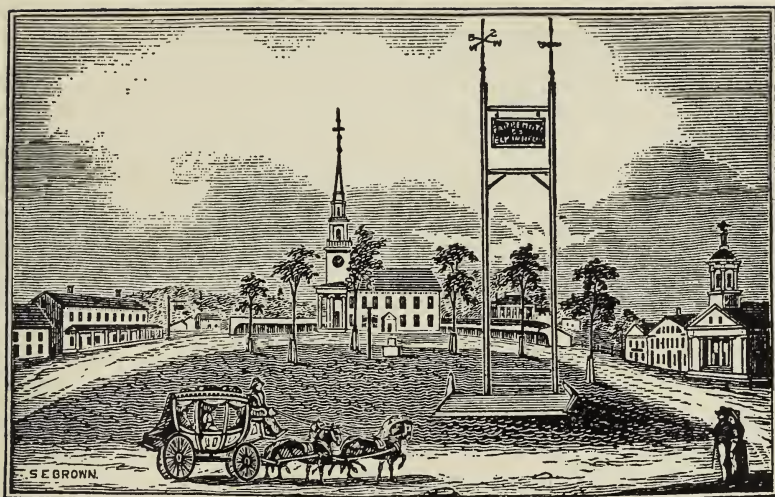
Look across the Common. Find the "hole" where there once was a major fire. On this side of the Common can you find the buildings newer than the Town Hall, such as the two bank buildings, the post office, and the library? Old and new have been carefully blended. Did you even notice the 1973 addition to Barre Savings Bank?

Common Pasture Land — what evidence do you find for that? Did you admire the rail and granite pillar fence? There are seven *well*-capped wells on the Common. Can you find them? Notice that younger, healthier trees are taking the place of the stately but diseased elms.

Memorials to individuals, such as the blue spruce, Washington elm, and the fountains, have stories to tell. The War Memorials, each different as if reflecting a differing mood of the day, are testimonials of by-gone eras.

Stroll around and notice the unusual old hitching posts in front of the savings bank and the unique lamp post in front of the library. Look up at the single remaining church spire. All add their bit to the picturesque scene.

Welcome to Barre!



Barre — 1840

TOUR II

South Street .4 mile one way

Walk out from the Common. Near the end of the sidewalk is the entrance to Cook's Canyon, a wildlife sanctuary maintained by Mass. Audubon Society. At the office are exhibits and a map of the sanctuary. A little farther out is a rectangular stone-walled pen, an old Town Pound, now on sanctuary property. (Still farther out one can travel by car to Stetson Home and Quabbin Regional Junior-Senior High School, both on impressive sites.)

TOUR III

Route 122 west from Barre Common to Rockingstone Park 5 miles one way

As you leave the Common, you will notice the name of Henry Woods, town benefactor, appearing on the library and the old Barre High School. Along this route are a bait shop, antique shops, and a bowling alley. Not far from town you will note several story-and-a-half houses and beyond them large two-story farmhouses and here and there a quaint Cape Cod house with large central chimney. At Dana Road, where Barre Mobile Home Park is located, turn around and retrace your route to Old Dana Road. Turn right and then right again as you climb the hill. It is a short distance to Rockingstone Park, a delightful picnic place featuring a geological curiosity.

TOUR IV



Wachusett Mt. from Summer Street



Barre Shoe Co. 1896-1903

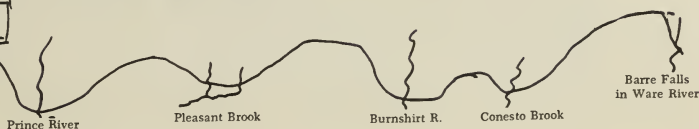
*Route 122 from Barre
Common to MDC Shaft 8
4 miles one way*

As you descend the hill it is hard to believe that on the left there once was a large shoe factory. Now there are only residences. Beyond the shopping center intersection, contrast the newer ranch style homes with the older homes of the center of town. Powder-Mill Pond appears on the right, and beyond on the left a brick building, now housing State trucks, but once the weave shed of a factory where blue denim was made. On the right is the Ware River, with inviting places to stop and picnic. Finally, there is the MDC facility with well-kept grounds and dam, where the Ware River flow may be diverted into either Wachusett or Quabbin Reservoir.

TOUR V




*Tour to the east — Barre Falls Dam 5.5 miles one way
(without side trips)*



This trip “cuts across the grain” of the town from the center to the eastern corner tip of the diamond-shaped Barre town boundary line. The start of the trip, and the hills between the valleys are approximately 900 feet above Mean Sea Level while the three river valleys are about 700 feet above MSL.

Contrast the present and past signs of fine residences and/or farms on the hills facing the valley of the Prince River; and the visual evidences of bustle and industry in the valleys and on the hills of the Burnshirt and Ware rivers. The land-takings of the 1930’s for watershed land, and the hurricane (and flood) of ’38 removed many of the landmarks of the past age.

Before you descend the Mechanic Street hill note the sign:  56 mi. Boston and the majestic view of Mount Wachusett. There are many fine residences and at the steepest pitch there is a “Thank-you” loop which takes you past a former cheese factory, now a greenhouse. Upon crossing the Prince River on the “Wallace Nutting Bridge,” (all the bridges across the Prince River were washed out in ’38), you are in Healdville (so designated on older maps) where there are machine shops, a foundry, and residences.

At this point you should take a side trip to the left up the valley to the Charles G. Allen Company where the first Yankee horse rake was built about 1873. The present products of the company are precision drilling and tapping machines, and gray iron castings. Along the valley are the stonework evidences of former mill ponds that drove waterwheels for saw and grist mills.

Also at this point you could go downstream on Valley Road to the Barre Wool Combing Co. Ltd. a distance of three miles. Wool top, the product of the company, is the essential starting material for worsted apparel. Greasy wool, the raw material for the wool top, is received here from the United States, South America, South Africa, and Australia. In the mill ponds formerly in the valley ice was cut for the ice-boxes and refrigerated cars of the area.

Once again at Healdville as you ascend the hill eastward note the old house on the right with three central chimneys, and another old house on the left with its accompanying barn on the right. The barn roof was new after the 1953 tornado removed the older one. At Sunrise Avenue is another farm with the residence on the higher ground to the left of the road and the site of the former huge framed barn on the right. There is an impressive view of the Ware River Valley.

Continuing past the two small brooks that join on the right to form Pleasant Brook, to Walnut Hill Road, you can observe Mount Monadnock, far to the north, by walking a few feet up Walnut Hill Road, turning around and looking through the saddle of the distant tree-line.

Difficult to find but on the left at the top of the hill, before the Burnshirt River, there is a small burying ground, about a mile in along a small cart road. The Prince Cemetery was given to the town by Prince Walker and contains five or six members of the Walker family. Quork Walker's court case was the first to free slaves in Massachusetts, and the Commonwealth subsequently became the first state to outlaw slavery.

Descending the hill you come to "Harwood's Crossing." The railroad line has been abandoned and almost all signs of the Harwood presence in the valley have been obliterated. The fact of the water power in the swift-running Burnshirt River, the presence of the east-west stage roads, and the north-south rail line linking to the Boston & Maine Rail line in the north, the Boston & Albany rail line in the south, and the Central Massachusetts rail line in the middle, were resources utilized by the Harwood families, who developed farms, mills, and small businesses in this valley.

For another side trip, a graveled road on the right, Granger Road, immediately after the old rail crossing takes you about a mile to a house attributed to be the oldest framed house in Barre. It has been called the Caldwell, Harwood, or Granger House. Mr. Caldwell made his first home under Shelving Rock, described elsewhere in the booklet, in the steep hill behind the house.

Traffic to Rutland from Barre once used the road which joins Granger Road at the Caldwell House. Covered Bridge Road takes you to the bridge abutments of that bridge which was floated downstream in '38, and never replaced. Also, you find beautiful Riverside Cemetery. Danish-born Jacob Riis (an account of his life and pictures of his residence are described in the 1973 Barre Town Report) is interred here under an unmarked boulder.

Upon returning to the Boston Road, you will find the Riis farm and home site on the left at a high rise where spruce trees mark the farm road leading up the hill to the lilacs surrounding the cellar hole.

Still traveling eastward you next pass Conesto Brook, a favorite haunt of fishermen, then the Town Line, past abandoned home sites, to the entrance of Barre Falls Dam.

Mill stones form the entrance gate, and typify the activity once present in the Ware River Valley above the Barre Falls. A sign, "Visitors Welcome" greets you at the facilities maintained by the US Corps of Engineers. There is a Water Resource Laboratory, a Communications Center, and garage. An information sign and literature are at the flagpole, as well as a picnic spot. On the structure over the gate closing the flow of the Ware River you can read the height above mean sea level. Beyond the dam is a parking area, and roadways beckoning one to explore further.

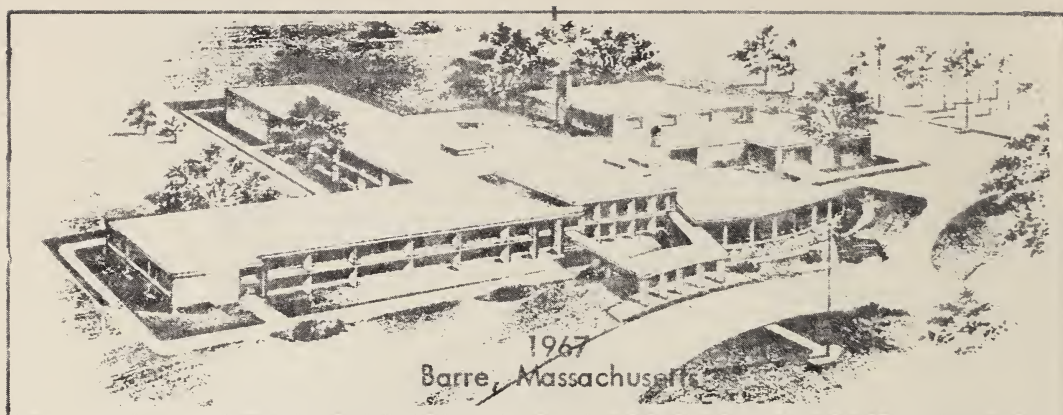


East Barre Falls in Days Gone By



Aerial View, Barre Falls Dam

photo courtesy of The Barre Gazette



Quabbin Regional Junior-Senior High School



Coldbrook Country Club owned and operated by Trifilo Bros.



Ruggles Lane School



Dr. Brown's Institution



Colonel Gaston's Mansion (now Blessed Sacrament Novitiate)



Barre Fair



Roger F. Langley School



Stetson Home for Boys



Jacob Riis's Grave

3 Snow Scenes



Williams Hall - Gone But Not Forgotten

Around the perimeter of the Barre Common there is just one vacant space — a place occupied for many years by the Williams Block. Instant amusement has become an American commodity and radio and television a way of life. It is difficult for the young people today to realize the role that Williams Hall in the Williams Block played in the life of the community.

Located upstairs, where for some time the telephone exchange was also situated, the "hall" was the locale of "something going on" nearly every night of the week.

Back in 1826 Harding P. Woods and Spencer Field founded a business firm and chose the northwest corner of Common and Grove streets as the site for the two story building to house their business which sold general merchandise. By 1884 Mr. Woods, who had been running the business for himself for some time, decided to retire and sell the store to two of his clerks, Alexander Williams and Marshall Hillman. In November of 1892 the building burned to the ground with a large loss of merchandise, but A. G. Williams personally supervised the erection of a new structure which contained the famous hall. This building was eventually sold to Sigurd Simenson in 1925 and contained a general store and grocery store for several decades.



CAST OF A PLAY IN WILLIAMS HALL ABOUT 1930

Left to right: Sarah Swan, Bill Weeks, Frank Hayes, Marian Damon, George Difley, Mae Case, Charles Rush, Mabel Allen, Alfred Taylor, Verna Wine, Tillman Taylor, Hazel Harmon, Louis Rush, Elsie Nightingale, Harold Allen, Doris Cutting, Bill Rice, Betty Church, Francis Rush, Marjorie Allen, Paul Hanson, Lucille Boyd.

The hall saw all facets of entertainment. Whenever a touring group of singers or minstrels arrived it was here that they performed. Speakers of note brought their wisdom to the townspeople within its walls, and on certain nights those same walls reverberated to the shouts of the sporting crowd as they cheered on the Barre A. C. against visiting basketball aggregations.

Even the famous "Fox Hunters' Balls" were held here for a while, and the "boards" were trod by amateur Thespians from many groups. On Memorial Days, special plays were produced by the G.A.R. and in later years, minstrel shows starring members of the American Legion were annual occurrences.

Here the original Barre Players Club first showed its talents; here Barre's own Bill Weeks performed his slack wire walking act. Here were held proms and balls, shows and contests, games and meetings. If there was a focal point for the town's non-political activities, Williams Hall was it.

With the advent of radio and TV and with the construction of newer and more modern auditoriums in our schools, Williams Hall was relegated to a minor position when on November 3, 1956, a disastrous fire levelled the building in which it was located. To some people in town it is more than a vivid memory; it is a place that is forever woven into their past — gone but not forgotten.

ALBERT L. CLARK



photo by C. William Tappin

Williams Block Ablaze.

The Barre Slavery Case

From the pages of *The History of Worcester County*, published in 1879, we find that the release from the servitude of slavery of one Quork Walker, a negro, residing in the northeast portion of this town and allegedly owned by one Nathaniel Jennison, set in motion the profound ultimate decision —

“That all men are born free and equal . . . that slavery is inconsistent with our own conduct and constitution; and there can be no such thing as perpetual servitude of a rational creature. . .”

Thus at Worcester County Courthouse, in April of 1783, by the verdict of Chief Justice William Cushing, the precedent was established whereby slavery was forever abolished from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

VIOLA BELCHER



Jennison-Caldwell Feud Over Quork Walker.

Sketch by Colleen Germond

When Barre Celebrated Chinese New Year

Over a period of many years Barre residents were served by a laundry run by a Chinese gentleman, Mr. Sam Sing Lee. At the turn of this century Mr. Lee decided that he was going to show the people of our town how his countrymen celebrated New Year's Day. On January 30th, 1900, which was Chinese New Year's, at 7:30 P.M., after countless hours of preparation, Sam Sing Lee held his celebration. He set off 5,000,000 firecrackers which he had braided into cables and suspended from 15-foot poles on the Common. They went off with an increasing crescendo of loud reports, which an observer described as being like thousands of rifles in rapid fire. As the explosions died down there was a grand finale of blazing colored lights in the form of serpents and fire devils. Three hundred spectators observed this display from an area that had been roped off in front of the Gazette office and between the town hall and the post office. After the sputtering display had died to embers and the smoke had cleared, everyone was invited to Mr. Lee's laundry on the corner of James and Summer streets where he served them oranges, candies, and other sweets. People came to congratulate him for the display and he responded with "Gung hee fa toy" which he translated as "I wish you success in the new year." It was a New Year's Celebration unique in the history of Barre.

ALBERT L. CLARK



Sam Sing Lee

Sketch by Colleen Germond

A Trilogy of Natural Disasters

I. FLOOD OF 1868

In the year 1850, residents in the northerly section of this town built a dam to hold back the waters of Mill Brook, thus creating a reservoir in case of drought. Approximately 80 acres were flooded. This dam, constructed of gravel, held; and various industries continued to prosper the entire length of the stream.

Then on the night of October 2, 1868, and after considerable rainfall, the dam suddenly gave way and, spilling its entire force, thundered down the course of the stream carrying everything in its paths.

Huge trees were uprooted, boulders weighing tons were carried along, and in minutes the debris, crashing against bridges, millsites, and dams, had devastated the valley for miles. Within the first two miles there were at least nine sizeable mill dams, six bridges, and five mills all washed away.

On the current swept, destroying a beautiful fence along the front of Glen Valley Cemetery, destroying the dam of James Desper near the fairgrounds, and finally calmed down enough to spread itself out on the meadows below the Worcester Road. This area was owned, in part, by Mr. Loring, Mr. Stetson, and Mr. Adams. (In this general area, within the memory of the writer, an auxiliary water supply was sought.)

The assets to be derived from the water power of this little stream could not long be dispensed with and, although losses were heavy and hard to estimate, work of reconstruction was begun almost at once. Most of the mills along the stream never recaptured their former vigor.

Seventy years later, almost to the day, ironically, nature was on the rampage again.



photos courtesy of Valma Murphy

II. FLOOD AND HURRICANE OF 1938

From the pages of The Barre Gazette dated October 1, 1938, with an extra headline in bold letters saying "Special Flood and Hurricane Issue," we are able to relate a few of the details following the three and one half days of continuous rain that dropped a total of fifteen inches on the town. The normal average for the entire month of August is three and one half inches. This, together with aid from a broken dike at the aforementioned reservoir, culminated in the worst flood that the town has ever known.



We will mention Barre Plains first, as it was the hardest hit, with the unbelievable amount of fifteen to twenty feet of water over its Common. In the store now owned by Roland Ethier one entered the building by boat through an attic window above the first floor.

People were evacuated and slept at High Plains School, although some never left their homes. As one came down South Street to where Hennick Bridge should have been, except for the fact that it had floated away and was now a half mile or so down the Ware River, one looked across to what appeared to be a large lake with the upper portions of Barre Plains's homes emerging out of it. At a point where it was possible to launch a boat, food, fresh water, and other supplies were carried into the village to the temporary quarters at Florence Hall and High Plains School. Today a marker in the Barre Plains fire station attests to the height at which the flood peaked.

The South Barre woolen mills were inundated. Crews worked night and day to try to keep the water back with sand bags. People living along Canal Road were terribly devastated, losing all their belongings and some even their dwellings. All bridges giving access to the town were gone or impassable, and South Barre also was dependent on the boat ferry which left South Street above Hennick Bridge.

Water damage in Barre center was confined to flooded cellars and road washout. The people hardest hit were those whose businesses dotted the river and here again, as in 1868, the rampaging water took everything before it, causing unestimated thousands of dollars worth of damage.

Then, and as if we were not struggling under enough calamity, the wind struck with hurricane force. Giant trees toppled. Roofs were torn off and deposited clear across town. The steeples of both the Unitarian and Methodist churches lay splintered on the ground. The top of the cupola on Barre Hotel crashed. The Civil War monument was broken off. Huge trees, in falling, damaged all kinds of property and our Common was an impassable network of tree trunks and branches tangled with telephone and light wires and debris.

During all this, the people applied themselves with the amazing good grace that adversity often brings to the forefront. Every sort of assistance was proffered and the work of reconstruction was cheerfully assumed. Casualties were thankfully few.

The incident of the flood has been regulated, we hope, by the building of the huge dikes at East Barre Falls whereby the water can be held back and diverted into other channels, thus keeping it forever from flooding the valley below. As for the hurricane, science has not yet harnessed it.

TORNADO OF 1953

June ninth, 1953, about 5 P.M., after a hot, humid day, but not unlike any other June day, it struck: the Tornado! Not in the history of New England, or at least as far back as records were kept, has such a phenomenon been recorded.

In a quiet, peaceful, green meadow in Petersham this ugly thing raised its head and, funneling itself into a gigantic swirl, moved with sinister force across Petersham, Barre, Rutland, Holden, northern Worcester, Shrewsbury, and Fayville, carrying, in minutes, death and destruction.

As the monster traveled in a straight path, people on either side of the forty-mile swath were unharmed, even unaware of the terrible tragedy that had beset those in its path. Hundreds were terribly injured and maimed. Ninety were dead and the losses in property damage were in the millions. It was the worst disaster in the history of Central Massachusetts.

Through the northwest section of Barre it tore a swath, leveling some dwellings as if they were kindling, smashing roofs and moving houses off their foundations, uprooting giant trees, and carrying everything aloft to deposit it sometimes miles farther on.

In the collapsed ruins of the home that was shared by the White and Strong families on Stagecoach Road, Mrs. White was trapped by falling beams, but was rescued, only to find that her eleven-year-old son had been killed not far from the home to which he had just returned from school. At the same time, Beverly Strong, a girl of eighteen, met her death in a pitiful manner.

Here, as in other saddened towns where frightful things had happened, townspeople and friends stood loyally by to give whatever comfort and assistance they could to the desolate and bereaved.

VIOLA BELCHER

Two Large Construction Projects

Quabbin Aqueduct and Barre Falls Dam

What would you name as the largest construction projects in Barre?

At one time it may have been a barn or a house raising when rum was used to pay the assembled crew of neighbors.

Or could it be the construction of one of the brick mill buildings such as at Barre Wool Combing Company?

Perhaps it was the construction of the new Worcester Road, the State Road.

In the 1920's and 30's the largest construction project was that of the Quabbin Aqueduct, 24.6 miles long, linking Wachusett Reservoir to Quabbin Reservoir. Twelve vertical shafts, numbered from east to west, were dug into the bedrock, and the stone removed from the base of each shaft to form a concrete-lined horseshoe shaped tunnel 12 feet, nine inches, high, and 11 feet wide at the base. In Barre are Shafts 8 and 9.

Shaft 8 at Coldbrook is a special one. The Metropolitan District Commission Engineers can divert the waters of the upper Ware River 275 feet down Shaft 8 to the Aqueduct where the water can be directed either to Wachusett Reservoir, Quabbin Reservoir, or both at the same time. At other times the Aqueduct can be used to transport water from Quabbin Reservoir eastward. To create a pool for the proper operation of the gates the MDC Engineers built a functional and aesthetically pleasing horseshoe shaped dam in the Ware River. Each stone block in the dam is pinned and grouted to its neighbors. The stone motif is carried throughout the MDC structures — the one over the shaft 8 housing the siphons, the gleaming brass engine room, and the Engineers' headquarters, and the building housing the fire trucks and drafting rooms.

In 1938 Winsor Dam and Goodnough Dike impounding Quabbin Reservoir were only partially complete. Wachusett Reservoir was full. The hurricane and flood of that year poured water over the dam at shaft eight as if it were only a ripple in the stream. Again in 1955 flood was the rule with Hurricane Diane. As a result the second big construction project began — the flood control dam at Barre Falls of the Ware River.

Work began in the summer of 1956 and work was completed in the winter of 1957-58. The maximum length of the dam is 885 feet, and its height 62 feet. There are three dikes which extend for a total of 3215 feet and have a maximum height of 48 feet. The dam is made from 800,000 cubic yards of rolled earth and rock fill.

BURTON R. FROST

The Railroads



B. & A. Railroad Station



Central R.R. Station

Barre Plains

As in most parts of our nation, the railroads played a vital role in the development of Barre. The construction of a decent highway system in Central Massachusetts was severely retarded in the 18th century. During winter months and in the muddy springs, it was difficult if not impossible to travel from place to place.

The railroads overcame this problem. They were relatively unaffected by the weather, and the power they generated made it possible to clear snow off the tracks. They provided means for the small industries to get their products to other parts of the country. With the invention of "refrigerated" cars, small country towns could afford to transport milk, cheeses, butter, and other farm products to markets in the city. It provided the impetus for another industry — the "harvesting" of ice. Lumber was still plentiful and could be shipped by rail, and seasonal crops such as berries could be on the tables of Boston in a day.

In particular the milk trains were important to Barre, and for one period of time we had more milk cows than any other community in the state. At the Barre station early in the morning dozens of horse-drawn teams would be backed up to the platform as hundreds of milk cans were wrestled into the cars for an early departure.

Barre had two separate lines passing through town. One, the Ware River Branch of the Boston and Albany Railroad, is the one that has survived in part to this day. It originated in Palmer stopping at Ware, Gilbertville, Old Furnace, Barre Plains, Coldbrook, and then travelled northward to East Hubbardston, Templeton, Baldwinville, Waterville, and Winchendon where it joined the Cheshire Branch, Peterboro Branch, and the Fitchburg Rail Road, Worcester Division (originally the Boston, Barre, and Gardner Rail Road, which never did get to Barre).



*Jim Farrigan
in sleigh coach going to station.*

ton at 5 A.M. and be in Barre at 10 A.M. Trains left Palmer at 8:30 A.M. and Winchendon at 7:30 A.M. and each arrived in Barre by 10 A.M. If you were a late riser you could leave Boston at 8:30 A.M. and you would be met by a stage in Worcester at 10 A.M. which would bring you directly to Barre.

For some years, many people did arrive by train to spend a few days or a week in our quiet town. Coaches would meet the trains and our visitors would put up at the Hotel Brunswick in Barre Plains or at the Barre Hotel, the Naquag House or at the Massasoit House. Conversely the stations were the points of departure for those leaving town for a short sojourn in one of the surrounding communities, for those who left for an indefinite period of time for service in the armed forces, or for those who were leaving permanently. Many sad farewells were said on the station platforms.

As the railroads spread westward to more spectacular places, the



Waiting for the train.

The other line was the Southern Division of the Boston and Maine Rail Road. From Northampton it proceeded to Bondsville, Gilbertville, New Braintree, Wheelwright, Barre (near Coldbrook), Coldbrook, West Rutland, Rutland, Muschopauge, Jefferson and eastward.

In Barre Plains we had a station for each railroad, one about six hundred feet south of the other and one each on Depot Road farther along each line.

In Palmer you could make connections for the Central Vermont or the Boston and Albany going either to Springfield or Boston. As early as 1875 you could leave Boston

the tourist business in Barre declined; the invention of the automobile began a steady improvement in our highway system and products and crops began to move by truck. The "ice crop" was replaced by refrigerators. Small industries which had been dependent on water power were replaced by large concerns in cities where electrical power and manpower were reliable and cheap.

The era of the rail road was over, and one of the distinctive sights and sounds of our community and our nation will be unknown to our children's children.

ALBERT L. CLARK

Two Treasures

STAGECOACH

Once owned by Dr. George Brown and associated in legend with colorful stage driver, Ginery Twichell, Barre's stagecoach was for many years on exhibit at Princeton Antique Auto Museum. Given by Barre Library Association to Barre Historical Society in 1963, the venerable coach is scheduled to take part in the big parade on August 17.



REVERE BELL

A generous and fitting gift in this bicentennial year, the 1814 Revere bell has been presented to the town, along with a new clock, by the members of the former Unitarian Church, with William R. Bentley as spokesman. For over 100 years the bell hung in the tower of the church popularly known as "The Brown Church," which was razed in 1969.

The clock and bell will be installed in the cupola of Barre Town Hall. Herbert A. Rice, for whom this project has been a labor of love, heads the installation committee, which includes Helen Connington and John Gould, members.

MARY KELLEY



Organizations

compiled by June Higgins

BARRE PLAYERS

Barre Players' Club was organized under the direction of the Rev. Robert S. Illingworth in 1956. Now, eighteen years later the words of the club's constitution still hold true: Barre Players "is a group interested in the theater and in the contribution an amateur theater group can make to the community."

BARRE GRANGE NO. 9

Barre Grange was formed in 1873 and held its 100th anniversary celebration last year at Coldbrook Country Club. The Grange or Patrons of Husbandry was formed to give aid to farmers in difficult times. Presently it is a social group of people from all walks of life who have community interests such as conservation, aid to 4-H, and scholarships for youth.

MT. ZION LODGE OF MASONS

Mt. Zion Lodge, of the Grand Lodge of Masons, was formed in the 1800's as a fraternal organization to practice charity to all people of every race, color, and creed and to promote the brotherhood of men.

CRADLE ROCK CHAPTER ORDER OF EASTERN STAR

Cradle Rock Chapter, No. 125, was appropriately named after the natural phenomenon consisting of two boulders so placed one on top of the other by glacial action, that according to legend the upper one would rock like a cradle. Started on October 27, 1909, Cradle Rock Chapter, O.E.S., has carried on its charitable work for many years. Its meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at Masonic Temple on Pleasant Street.

BARRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Formed on December 9, 1954, Barre Historical Society has as its purpose the maintenance of a local museum, the preservation of local history, and the protection forever of historical sites and buildings. It is an active and worthy group.

LIONS CLUB

One of the newer clubs in Barre, the Lions Club was organized in 1964. Members are concerned with the prevention of blindness and assistance to the blind. A current project is sponsoring a pre-school eye clinic to detect eye problems which might prevent a successful start in some child's school career.

NO. 4 COMMUNITY CLUB

In 1937 the town deeded the old No. 4 School to a group of interested persons as a clubhouse for former students, teachers, and neighborhood families. The club holds Halloween and Christmas parties, food sales, picnics and supper reunions, old time rural fairs, and art and talent shows.

VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

George Simonds was the man who first saw the need for a Village Improvement Society. The society was very active in former days, sponsoring gala fetes on the Common. Annual meetings are still held and members sponsor town beautification projects to this day.

FRIDAY CLUB

Founded in 1907, the Friday Club is dedicated to cultural pursuits. It sponsors the annual spelling bee for grammar school students and buys books for the school and town library.

BARRE RETIRED TEACHERS CLUB

With about twelve retired teachers as members, this group has luncheon meetings on the second Tuesday of each month and has provided several scholarships for Barre students.

DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE

Affiliated with the national democratic organization, the Barre Democratic Town Committee works to help elect democratic officials in the county, state, and federal government. Members attend political gatherings in Worcester, Hampden, and Hampshire counties.

BARRE REPUBLICAN TOWN COMMITTEE

Founded many years ago, the Republican Town Committee has been host to several of our Massachusetts governors on various occasions. Today there are 35 members whose goal is to provide good government for our state and our nation.

SONS OF UNION VETERANS CIVIL WAR CAMP 86

This patriotic organization of men who were sons of Civil War veterans holds monthly meetings, gives flags to schools and churches, puts flags on Grand Army graves on Memorial Day, and provides speakers for programs. Their auxiliary, founded in 1927, disbanded in 1967.

AMERICAN LEGION POST 2

The American Legion was born in Paris in March, 1919. The Barre Post 2 was formed on June 17, 1919. Members help townspeople, veterans, and Scout troops. It is a strong organization of veterans to the present day.

AMERICAN LEGION POST 2 AUXILIARY

The Auxiliary of Post 2 was formed on December 13, 1919, to help the legionnaires on all projects. They sponsor a high school girl for Girls' State, hold essay contests, do hospital work, and aid Girl Scouts.

AMERICAN LEGION POST 404

World War II veterans in South Barre first met at the Spa, then built their permanent home in 1947. They donate the use of the building to many local organizations and also as a Surplus Food center. The organization provides Santa Claus and gives gifts at school Christmas parties, and holds various social events, including Wednesday night Bingo.

AMERICAN LEGION POST 404 AUXILIARY

The Auxiliary of Post 404 helps the legionnaires in patriotic and civic projects and sponsors a girl for Girls' State.

KIWANIS CLUB

The Kiwanis Club, a businessmen's group, has undertaken many civic projects, including the construction of two skating rinks, sponsorship of a swimming program, aid to Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and distribution of Christmas gifts for needy children.

BARRE HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Re-established in June, 1967, the Alumni Association received funds held in trust and with the interest thereof provides a yearly scholarship in memory of Principal Leroy L. Dawson. The association has established a room in Barre Historical Society building, for trophies, banners, and other memorabilia of the former Barre High School.

GOLDEN AGE CLUB

Founded in April, 1973, at the initiative of Norah Jacobs, Alice Darling, Grace Fritscher, and Eva Rich, the Golden Age Club a year later has well over 100 members. Meetings are held twice a month in the club's own rooms in the former Barre High School. The club has many social events and a harvest fair and also takes an active role in formulating legislation pertaining to elderly citizens.

EARTH TURNERS

The Earth Turners is a square dance club first organized in New Braintree. The club moved to Barre, when Mr. and Mrs. Robert Habershaw, square dance enthusiasts, got permission from the selectmen to use Grange Hall for lessons. Upon graduation dancers receive pins and diplomas and then may dance at their own club dances, held at Ruggles Lane School, or "anywhere in the world," since square dancing is a universal organization.

BARRE WOMAN'S CLUB

The Woman's Club was formed in 1916 with Miss Lucy Rice as first president. Open to all women in the community, the club is dedicated to community service. The local club joined the Mass. State Federation of Woman's Clubs in 1952. Lighting the Christmas tree on the Common is only one of the club's worthy projects.

SOUTH BARRE WOMEN'S CLUB

Established many years ago by the women in the south part of town, the club is a social and service organization which helps the young and the elderly.

BARRE THIEF AND ROGUE DETECTING SOCIETY

This group was founded in 1780 with dues of fifty cents, which have not changed. To date the group posts bonds and rewards to encourage the apprehension of vandals of public property.

BARRE EMERGENCY AND RESCUE SQUAD INCORPORATED

Founded in February, 1971, the Rescue Squad is an all-volunteer service department to give the town better and faster ambulance service with qualified attendants having medical knowledge, especially of cardiac arrest. Equipped with two vehicles, one a rescue vehicle and ambulance, the other an ambulance owned by the town, the squad has two rescue attendants go with patients to the hospital. The Board of Directors has 7 members. The squad uses radio service affiliated with the Police Department and is also equipped with emergency radios. (Residents of the town call the Police Department for service.)

METHODIST W. S. C. S.

The Women's Society for Christian Service was organized many years ago to support the church by raising funds at fairs, suppers, and other events. The fruits of their efforts are repairs to the church and a remodeled kitchen.

ST. THOMAS-a-BECKET LADIES' SODALITY

This group of women works for the benefit of the church with an enriched social life.

WOMEN'S GUILD OF CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The women of the church hold suppers and an annual fair to raise money for the church.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP, BARRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The women's organization does local and foreign missionary work and helps to support Barre Congregational Church by holding fairs, suppers, and other social events.

ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH: ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Founded 15 years ago, the society's aims are to bear witness to Christ by showing faith and bringing together men of good will. It strives to establish a personal relationship between its membership and those who suffer, and to bring the latter the most efficacious and brotherly aid possible. St. Joseph's Women's Guild is presently inactive.

LADIES' AUXILIARY, BARRE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Ladies raise money to furnish men with food after fighting fires that last many hours; also have Christmas parties, outings, picnics, and an enriched social life.

BUCKET BRIGADE, SOUTH BARRE AND BARRE PLAINS

The ladies help by raising money to provide food for the fire fighters and also hold Christmas parties, outings, picnics, and a good social life.

BARRE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB

Sportsmen get together at the clubhouse on Spring Hill Road where they have clam bakes and other social and sport events. They sponsor a fishing derby and have many plans for the future.

SOUTH BARRE ROD AND GUN CLUB

Outdoor sports enthusiasts get together to pool their resources. Competitions and field trials are held here at the clubhouse on Wheelwright Road with the local group as host. Members stock the local area for fishing and have game dinners, outings, and other social events.

BARRE RIDING AND DRIVING CLUB

This active group holds quarterly meetings, conducts trail trims, has sponsored an annual 35-mile competitive trail ride for the past ten years, and holds horse shows, among them the Junior Horse Show, the proceeds of which are used for scholarships in memory of Jennie Blaisdell.

BARRE BOYS' CLUB

Barre Wool Combing Company Ltd. provided the building, the former Florence Hall, and Barre Boys' Club opened its doors in 1960. Here boys grow to be better men under good leadership. They engage in sports and craft projects at the clubhouse. Members also take field trips, have a summer day camp, and compete with other clubs in sports.

BARRE 4-H CLUB

4-H was founded in 1915 in Worcester County. A club was organized in Barre in about 1920 by Mrs. Roscoe Johnson. Young people of Barre have brought home local, county, state, and even national awards. Motto: "To Make the Best Better."

BARRE LITTLE LEAGUE

Little League was started in Barre in 1953 by Walter Talancy. At present there are six teams: Alco, Curtis, Beard, Medical Pharmacy, Oakham, and Petersham. When members are 12 years old, they graduate from the league and are presented trophies.

SUMMER REPERTORY COMPANY

Charles Hudson and Brent Hopkins founded this group about five years ago to promote theater for young people in the Town of Barre. The Repertory Company plans three productions during the summer: Blithe Spirit, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, and A Midsummer Night's Dream.

THE MIDGETS

This is a drama group sponsored by the Summer Repertory Company for youngsters in junior high school. Judy Hodgen is manager.

BARRE ASSEMBLY NO. 114

International Order of the Rainbow for Girls.

This Assembly was started in June of 1964 and this year will celebrate its 10th birthday. There were 36 charter members and Miss Gail Hakala of Hubbardston was its first Worthy Advisor. Rainbow assemblies are sponsored either by Eastern Star Chapters or Masonic Lodges. Barre Assembly is sponsored by Cradle Rock Chapter No. 125, Order of the Eastern Star. The Advisory Board of the Assembly is appointed each year by the Worthy Matron of Cradle Rock Chapter. Two members of the first Advisory Board have continuously served and are currently the Mother Advisor, Mrs. Madeline Willey and the Treasurer of the Board, Mr. Walter Flister.

There are Rainbow assemblies in every one of the United States as well as in many foreign countries such as Germany, Japan, Great Britain, Newfoundland. The lessons which Rainbow hopes to teach to its members are love, religion, nature, immortality, fidelity, patriotism and service. The members are girls between the ages of 12 and 20.

Barre Assembly has had 28 past worthy advisors, from Barre, Hubbardston, Princeton, Petersham and Hardwick. Its members are from various towns.

SQUARE ABOUTS

This square dance group for pre-teens and young teen-agers was formed in 1970 by Joseph Pitisci to give the youngsters in town some organized recreation. The venture received enthusiastic response. Dances are held in Grange Hall.

GIRL SCOUTS

A Girl Scout troop was organized in 1935 by Margaret Bentley. The club helps girls become good citizens. Margaret Sawtell was a leader for ten years, and Dolly Lang served for 30 years and is still cookie sales coordinator.

BROWNIES

Valma Murphy and Margaret Glancy were long-time leaders of the Brownie troop, which is for girls 8 to 10 years old. The group is still active.

BOY SCOUTS

Formed in September, 1913, as Troop I at Christ Church, the Barre Boy Scouts later became Troop 26. Scouting has ever since been an integral part of community life, with Boy Scouts helping in many civic projects. In recent years Stetson Home has had an active troop also.

CUB SCOUTS

For boys not yet of Boy Scout age there are several Cub Scout dens in town. They learn crafts and hold monthly pack meetings at Legion Hall.

QUABBIN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

Embracing the communities of Union No. 63 are numerous organizations, among them the Quabbin Community Pro Musica, which supports the Quabbin Regional High School and Quabbin Community bands in all their ventures, including the Barre Band Concerts.

We would like to thank everyone who helped to prepare this
Bicentennial Brochure.

BROCHURE COMMITTEE

MARY KELLEY, *chairman*

VIOLA BELCHER

SUSAN R. CASTONGUAY

ALBERT L. CLARK

BURTON R. FROST

COLLEEN GERMOND

